

Message Text

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13

ACTION NEA-03

INFO OCT-01 ISO-00 /004 W

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R 300658Z JAN 76W

FM AMEMBASSY ISLAMABAD

TO SECSTATE WASHDC 3901

AMEMBASSY KABUL

AMEMBASSY NEW DELHI

AMEMBASSY TEHRAN

LIMITED OFFICIAL USE ISLAMABAD 1022

FOLLOWING SENT ACTION AMEMBASSY ISLAMABAD INFO AMCONSUL
KARACHI DTD 29 JAN 76 H/W REPEATED TO YOU

QUOTE

LIMITED OFFICIAL USE LAHORE 0120

E.O. 11652: N/A

TAGS: PFOR, PK, IR

SUBJECT: SHAH-IN-SHAH EXPECTED TO VISIT PAKISTAN IN MARCH

1. DURING IRANIAN CONSUL GENERAL PEDRAM'S RECEPTION
FOR HIS FOREIGN MINISTER DR. KHALATBARI (ATTENDING RCD
MINISTERIAL COUNCIL MEETING HERE) JANUARY 28, PUNJAB
GOVERNOR ABBASI INFORMED ME PRIVATELY HE EXPECTS SHAH-
IN-SHAH OF IRAN TO VISIT LAHORE TWO DAYS IN MARCH. THIS
CAME OUT WHEN GOVERNOR MENTIONED HOW PREOCCUPIED HE HAD
BEEN WITH VISITORS, INCLUDING CURRENTLY PRIMIN BHUTTO
AND IRANIAN AND TURKISH FONMINS, AND I ASKED WHAT OTHER
VIPS HE EXPECTED IN NEAR FUTURE.

2. I THEN ASKED GOVERNOR IF SHAH WERE TO BE CHIEF GUEST
AT THIS YEAR'S PUNJAB AWAMI MELA (FORMERLY LAHORE HORSE
SHOW) AS IN PAST. GOVERNOR STATED CONFIDENTIALLY THAT
DECISION HAD BEEN MADE EARLIER NOT TO HOLD AWAMI MELA THIS
YEAR, BUT PROPOSAL NOW BEING CONSIDERED TO CONDUCT ABBRE-
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VIATED, PERHAPS TWO-DAY VERSION FOR SHAH IN EARLY MARCH.

HE ADDED, I THOUGHT WITH SOME DISDAIN, THAT MFA OFTEN DOES NOT INFORM HIM UNTIL LAST MINUTE OF TIMING OF VIP VISITS.

3. LATER I TRIED TO CONFIRM WITH CONSUL GENERAL PEDRAM, MENTIONING CASUALLY THAT I HAD HEARD HE MIGHT HAVE ANOTHER DISTINGUISHED VISITOR IN NEAR FUTURE. HE REPLIED THAT IF I MEANT SHAH-IN-SHAH, HE HAD ONLY JUST LEARNED "FROM THEM" (INDICATING FONMIN KHALATBARI AND PARTY) THAT SHAH MIGHT VISIT LAHORE THIS SPRING, THOUGH HE PROFESSED NOT TO KNOW WHEN.

4. WE HAVE BEEN TRYING TO FIND OUT FOR SEVERAL WEEKS WHEN AWAMI MELA WOULD BE HELD, IN ORDER TO ANSWER QUERIES FROM COLLEAGUES AT OTHER POSTS AND COORDINATE OUR INTEREST IN RELATED ACTIVITIES SUCH AS VISIT OF U.S. POLO TEAM FIRST HALF OF MARCH, BUT HAVE SO FAR DRAWN BLANKS FROM MELA DIRECTORATE AND GOPUNJAB OFFICIALS NORMALLY CONCERNED. CHAUDHRI BASHIR, PUNJAB DIRECTOR OF SPORTS, TOLD US JANUARY 29 THAT RUMORS OF CANCELLATION OF MELA WERE UNTRUE AND PLANNERS HAVE RECEIVED ORDERS TO GO AHEAD WITH SOME SORT OF MELA FOR WHICH "PRELIMINARY PREPARATIONS" UNDERWAY. OFFICE OF COL. ANSARI, EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR OF MELA, HOWEVER, DOES NOT ANSWER PHONE.

5. COMMENTS: THIS IS FIRST WE HAVE HEARD OF INTENDED VISIT BY SHAH-IN-SHAH TO PAKISTAN. WE LEAVE IT TO EMBASSY TO ASSESS SUBSTANTIVE IMPLICATIONS AND PASS WHATEVER DESIRED OF FOREGOING TO DEPARTMENT AND TEHRAN. FOR OUR PART, WE FIND IT CURIOUS THAT GOVERNMENT WOULD CONSIDER DROPPING POPULAR EXTRAVAGANZA WHOSE "BREAD AND CIRCUS" ATMOSPHERE PUNJABI AWAM SEEM TO ENJOY TOO MUCH. PERHAPS THERE ARE POLITICAL/SECURITY RISKS WHICH AUTHORITIES DO NOT WISH TO RUN THIS YEAR. WHATEVER THE REASON, TIME IS RUNNING SHORT TO LAY ON USUAL EIGHT-DAY BLOWOUT BY MARCH. SPENGLER

UNQUOTE
BYROAD

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